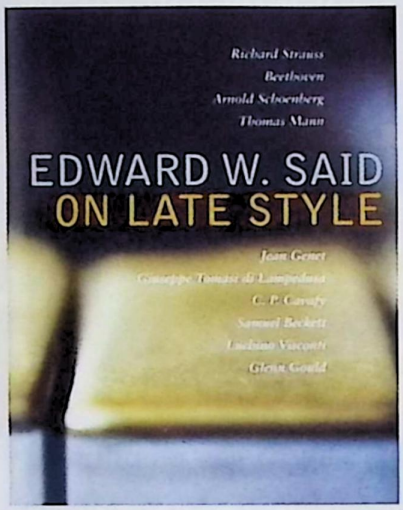
IN the long, and characteristically eloquent, interview Edward W. Said gave a few weeks before he died on September 25, 2003 -- an interview now available on videotape -- the Palestinian-American critic talks about the difficulty he was having in reading, writing, talking, and even coping with the simplest demands of everyday life; the twelve-year struggle with leukemia had apparently drained the sixty-seven year old intellectual of all energy. And yet what strikes anyone watching the video is his alertness and the effortlessness and compulsiveness with which he wants to tell posterity about his life and his works. Undoubtedly, Said was losing out in his battle with cancer, but, obviously, here was a man determined not to go gently into the night and bent on explaining what he had been up to in a lifetime devoted to Palestine, art and culture, as well as the profession of English and comparative literature.

In fact, late in his life, Said seemed to have found an immense source of energy, as if, before losing out in his race with time, he would do everything he could to leave behind a legacy that would be truly distinctive. It was as if he had decided that his life should be as rounded as he could make it to be. Out of the 20 or so books that he authored, around ten were published in the last twelve years of his life; at least four more have come out posthumously. Of them, *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map* (2004) is about the Middle East as seen by one of the fiercest critics of American foreign policy of recent decades; *Humanistic and Democratic Criticism* discusses the function of criticism in our time (2004), and the other two, *Freud and the Non-European* (2003) and *On Late Style* (2006) deal with a phenomenon that fascinated the dying scholar-critic, lover of classical western music and aesthete, something that he characterized as "late style."

What is late style? It is something that Said sees heralding the culminating phase of a great artist's career; a phase when the artist as an old man (Said does not discuss any woman artist who has distinguished herself by her late style in these books) has intimations of mortality and, therefore, forges a distinctive but disturbing manner of envisioning times past, the present, and the future. It is worthwhile here to remember that Said's second book was called *Beginnings* (1975), as if to intimate that with it he was beginning again, decisively, swerving away from the conventionally scholarly inaugural book, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*. In the works under review, on the other hand, Said seems to have veered off towards an exploration of the repercussions of lateness in his favourite artists in the winter of his own life.



Edward W Said. ***Freud and the Non-European.*** *With an Introduction by Christopher Bollas and a response by Jacqueline Rose.* Verso: published in association with the Freud Museum. London, 2003

Of the two books that are the subject of this essay, *Freud and the Non-European* is a monograph-length work comprising the lecture Said delivered at the Freud Museum in London shortly before he died. The main subject of the work is Freud's perspective on Judaism and on its non-European origins. Said observes that for most of his career Freud scorned other cultures, except when he was trying to find evidence of atavistic impulses in the western unconscious when psychoanalyzing phenomena such as incest. Such Eurocentrism, Said concedes, may be seen as unexceptionable, given Freud's family background and intellectual lineage, but he will not let the father of psychoanalysis off the hook so easily. Said notes that Frantz Fanon, "surely Freud's most disputatious heir," found such Eurocentrism dehumanizing, especially in the case of intellectuals supposedly upholding "the whole edifice of European humanism" and representing the pinnacle of enlightenment thought.

However, Said finds one instance in Freud's oeuvre where he pays sustained attention to a non-European. This occurs when the psychoanalyst turned his attention to studying Moses in his last major work, *Moses and Monotheism*. Said remarks that it was written at a point of time when, for many Jews, the tenets of Judaism had hardened into Zionism. But ever the "overturner and a re-mapper of accepted or settled geographies and genealogies," Freud makes no attempt at reconciliation with his faith in this late work.

Instead, Said finds that Freud's illness, the Nazi era, and the uncertainty of life for a Jew settled in Vienna had led him into an exploration of the tenets of the faith that he was born into, and of the identity of one of its founders.

To Said, Freud is almost reckless and quite defiant in emphasizing Moses's Egyptianness, and in stressing that many of the rituals that came to Judaism had affiliations with Egyptian rituals.

Said suggests that Freud was proud of his Jewish ancestry but secular in his outlook. Indeed, he was quite critical of Zionism when it sought to promote Jewish immigration to Palestine. How different, Said implies, is the